

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE SOUTHEAST REGION NEWS RELEASE

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NOAA FISHERIES SOUTHEAST REGION ACTIVATES TOLL FREE CUSTOMER SERVICE LINE

1-866-570-5301 is the number to call for information about marine fisheries in the Southeast U.S.

Today NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Regional Office has activated a toll free customer service line that will enable citizens to quickly get answers to the most frequently asked questions about the Southeast Region's missions, services, regulations, and management actions.

"We're pleased to offer this toll free number, 1-866-570-5301, as an easy way for our customers to obtain information and to reach us," said Joseph Powers, acting administrator of NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Region. "An important feature of this service is that callers can press zero any time during their call to leave a message if the information they're looking for is not available through the recordings. A member of our staff will monitor the voice message box throughout each business day and direct all messages to appropriate regional personnel. Thus, callers can be assured that whoever calls them back will be the best person to handle their call and is thoroughly prepared to provide excellent service."

"While callers will not be able to reach staff members directly via the toll free line, the commercial phone number of each key staff element is provided in the main menu if callers have an urgent need to reach us," added Powers. "However, our hope is that constituents will find using the toll free service is a cost effective and efficient way to conduct business with us."

This and other Southeast Regional news releases and fishery bulletins are available on the region's Internet home page:

<http://caldera.sero.nmfs.gov>

NOAA Fisheries is an agency of the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The agency conducts scientific research and provides services and products to support fisheries management, fisheries development, trade and industry assistance, enforcement, and protected species and habitat conservation programs.

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